

Message Text

SECRET

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61

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 381

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

S E C R E T CARACAS 5625

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1

TAGS: PBOR PFOR VE CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN OFFSHORE BOUNDARY DISPUTE;
COLOMBIA DECIDES TO INVOKE 1939 TREATY

REF: BOGOTA 5348

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUGGESTED INVOCATION BY COLOMBIA OF 1939 TREATY AS OUTLINED BOGOTA'S INTERESTING TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE IS BOUND TO AROUSE VENEZUELAN OFFICIAL AND POPULAR OPPOSITION IRRESPECTIVE AT WHAT TIME SUCH A PROPOSAL IS MADE, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE IMPENDING VISITS OF FONMIN VASQUEZ AND PRESIDENT PASTRANA TO VENEZUELA. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, VENEZUELANS HAVE AN ALMOST PSYCHOTIC FEAR OF MEASURES OF ARBITRATION AND JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE, HARKING BACK TO THEIR DEEPLY IMBEDDED FEELING THAT HISTORICALLY, EACH TIME THEY HAVE HAD RECOURSE TO INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS OF THIS NATURE, THEY HAVE SOMEHOW OR OTHER COME OUT ON THE SHORT END OF THE DEAL.

2. ALTHOUGH THIS IS STRICTLY A COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN PROBLEM,
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AUTHORITIES IN BOGOTA WILL SURELY HAVE IN MIND THAT INVOCATION

OF THE 1939 TREATY AT THIS JUNCTURE WILL INEVITABLY ENTER INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA AS THE PRINCIPAL CONTESTANTS DRAW CLOSER TO ELECTION DAY DECEMBER 9. IRONICALLY, THE ADECO CANDIDATE, CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, WILL PROBABLY SEEK "TO OUT-HEROD HEROD" BECAUSE HE IS HIMSELF OF HALF COLOMBIAN ORIGIN AND AT PRESENT IS LEANING OVER BACKWARD TO PROVE HE IS AS MUCH IF NOT MORE VENEZUELAN THAN ANY OTHER CANDIDATE.

3. RE PARA FIVE REFTEL, ALTHOUGH IT IS TRUE ADECOS WERE NOT HAPPY WHEN CALDERA NEGOTIATED THE TWELVE-YEAR STANDOFF AGREEMENT WITH GUYANA, THIS STATESMANLIKE MEASURE TO DEFUSE THE VENEZUELAN-GUYANESE BOUNDARY DISPUTE IS NOW GREETED WITH GENERAL SATISFACTION BORDERING ON APATHY. IT MIGHT EVEN TRANSPIRE THAT IF THE ADECOS COME TO POWER, THEY MIGHT TAKE A STRONGER LINE AGAINST COLOMBIA THAN AGAINST GUYANA.
MCCLINTOCK

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